

Evelin Ilves and a former Olympics sailor, Toomas Tõniste, paid a visit today to Tallinn Secondary Science School to acknowledge rower Jüri-Mikk Udam, who was last year awarded the Young Athlete's Award of the First Lady's Foundation of the Cultural Foundation of the President of the Republic.

According to Evelin Ilves, all the sportsmen who've been acknowledged with the Young Athlete's Award set a double example for their peers – acting as role models in both sports and school life; however, this also means twice the amount of responsibilities for the young athletes. "With the award we must not forget that excellent achievements, worthy of acknowledgement, require co-operation. Therefore, the award should be seen not just as acknowledgement of the young athlete, but also his or her next of kin, the team and all the fans. Furthermore, anyone deciding on competitive sports should immediately start thinking of options available once the highest levels of achievement have been reached and the athlete's career comes to an end. Learning and educational qualifications are highly important for paving the road to success in the future, after one's life in competitive sports," Evelin Ilves added.

When introducing his athletic career to the gymnasium students, Toomas Tõniste emphasised that those choosing the life of a champion must be ready to train for periods as long as working days, full of sacrifice. "Entrepreneurship, skills and volition to work are needed apart from education. Simply daydreaming won't take you anywhere, you have to work and sweat hard to achieve the expected results," Tõniste told.

Evelin Ilves traditionally pays a visit accompanied by some of Estonia's top athletes to the schools attended by the recipients of the Young Athlete Prize, to acknowledge both the recipient and his/her school.

Rower Jüri-Mikk Udam was born in 1994 and studies in the 12th class of Tallinn Secondary Science School. Jüri-Mikk took his first steps along the road of the athlete at the age of six, in swimming classes, and soon achieved good results in competition. He began rowing classes four years ago and has shown great promise; for example, he won a silver medal at his first Estonian Junior Championship in pair-oar and took part in the Olympics in pair-oar with Geir Suursild during his fourth year of training. He is Estonian Junior Class Champion and third in U23's single oar.

The Young Athlete Prize of the First Lady's Foundation of the Cultural Foundation of the President of the Republic is a prize intended to acknowledge under-21-year-olds with very good academic achievements. The prize is earmarked for the recipients' training and competition costs. The Young Athlete prize can be up to 3,200 euros per recipient. To date, the prize has been divided between several recipients. The award was established in autumn 2009.

This spring's application round for the Young Athlete's Award will remain open until 4th April 2013. Additional information about the award is available from <http://bit.ly/YIk5Yt>

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